Dear Design,

17.6868° N, 83.2185° E - 41.8781° N, 87.6298° W

A collection of short stories about Seetharam Vallabhaneni's work

Volume 1 2017

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2012 - 2017
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2012
Product Design Internship
Dhama Innovations

Indicator Jacket for Pedestrians & Cyclists

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2012 - 2017
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PREFACE

Design is a way to break free from the conventional wisdom or thoughts that are an integral part of society. It gives me the opportunity to question everything and the freedom to explore. Most importantly it gives me the opportunity to try and to fail. What I love about this field is that it gives my work an opportunity to touch numerous lives and make a meaningful contribution. ***The most challenging thing for me is the responsibility that comes along with it - towards the social as well as natural environments*** and to enable meaningful interactions between the two and ***create mutually beneficial ecosystems***.

I firmly believe that there are no fixed disciplines in this world today. I try to incorporate this fluidity in my work; be it in terms of material choices, ideas or inspirational sources. ***I am interested in exploring the interdisciplinary nature of today's world and pushing the boundaries of what is possible*** through exploration, experimentation and collaboration. I also find the notion of vernacular vs contemporary very primitive and believe that best solutions can be achieved by learning from our past and combining that knowledge with the latest technology.

Materials, forms, phenomena, colors, textures or various combinations of these elements act as the language through which I express my Ideas. My interest in material exploration allows me to understand the material I am working with better and know its inherent properties. Later, these properties and the way materials interact with their environment translate into a key element of my design itself. ***I strive to find seamless answers to questions posed by our evolving lifestyles*** - from the opaque, clarity and rule driven industrial era to the translucent, more organic and fluid present. I love exploring the possibilities of combining different materials, techniques and phenomena and applying them in unconventional ways to achieve my goals. ***Most of my work involves remixing these different elements and their contexts as we know them to come up with provocatively optimistic, sustainable solutions that better serve our contemporary lifestyles and improve user experiences.***

I also use other forms of expression like writing, installations, photography and graphic design to tell my stories.

I am Seethalam Vallabhaneni and this is my story..... . . _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ so far.

SEETHARAM VALLABHANENI
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Experience

2017 Model Making Volunteer at *Chicago Architectural Biennial* (ongoing)

Participating in model development, buildout, and installation.

Recently added finishing touches and details for the physical model of PRODUCTORA's proposal for the 2017 Chicago Architecture Biennial

2017 Exhibit Design Intern at *Chicago Design Museum* (May - August)

Participating in exhibition development, buildout, and installation.

Designing marketing collateral, publications, and print material.

2015 Founder/Director at *seem:less*

Designed websites, logos, business cards for students and upcoming businesses.

Designed branding identity package for Silver Oaks School.

2015 Architectural Intern at *SMG Design* (March - June)

Member of the design team working on ***Shilparamam*** project - a cultural center capturing the esscence of a south-indian village in Guntur, India.

Created presentations, program outlines, digital models, initial construction documents

2011 Member of wearable prototyping team at *Dhama Innovations* (May - August)

Worked with wearable electronics and globally patented CryothermicTM Nanotechnology called ClimaCon®.

Designed and fabricated an ***indicator jacket*** for pedestrians and cyclists using arduino lillypad and LEDs.

Education

2012 - 2017 Bachelor of Fine Art degree at *School of the Art Institute of Chicago*
Architecture, Designed Objects, Furniture Design, Photography.

2016 Architectural Association : Visiting School in Istanbul, Turkey at *Istanbul Bilgi University* (June)
Robotic fabrication, Computational design.

2015 Summer School in Barcelona, Spain at *ESADE Business School* (June -July)
Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Project management, Design thinking.

Publications

2016 Opaque. Transparent. Translucent : thoughts on spatial permeability in contemporary sacred architecture. (www.academia.edu)

2012 Tedx - Boundaries of Syllabus : Sustainability for a better society. (click here to view the talk)

Affiliations

2016 AIA Chicago chapter
2016 NOMAS SAIC chapter

Recognitions

2017 Adobe Design Achievement Awards - Semi Finalist (*Upside Down*)

2017 Group Exhibition - Design Possibilities on Cermak (*Giga Village*)

2017 Fellow - HKS Design Fellowship Midwest

Software

Revit
Rhino
Grasshopper
Rhino Vault
KUKA I prc
Fusion 360
Maxwell Studio
AutoCAD
C++
HTML + Java Script
Arduino
Illustrator
Photoshop
Muse
inDesign
Premiere + After Effects

Skills

Model making
Large format printing
Wood & Metal fabrication
Prototype fabrication
Circuit designing + building
Familiarity with electronical components and tools

Techniques

Laser cutting
3D printing
Robotic hot wire cutting

Languages

English - native
Telugu - native
Hindi - fluent
Spanish - basic

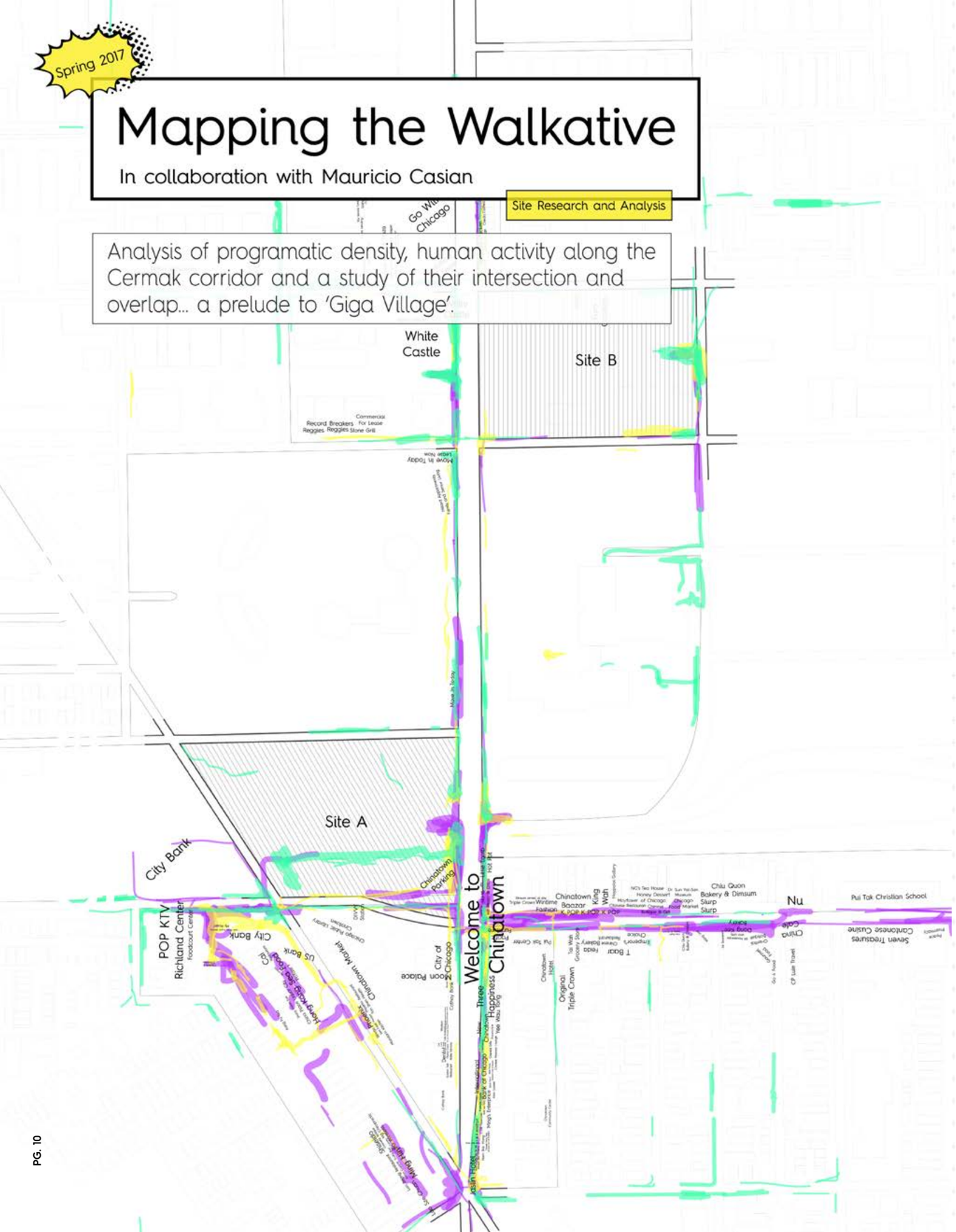
Spring 2017

Mapping the Walkative

In collaboration with Mauricio Casian

Site Research and Analysis

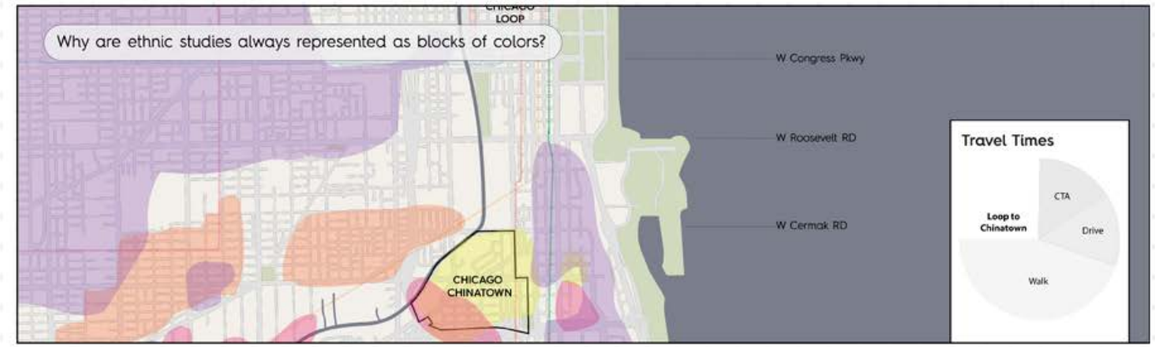
Analysis of programatic density, human activity along the Cermak corridor and a study of their intersection and overlap... a prelude to 'Giga Village'.



Our goal was to explore the intersections of Public Life, Community Connections & Transit Infrastructure

Ethnicity
CITY SCALE STUDY

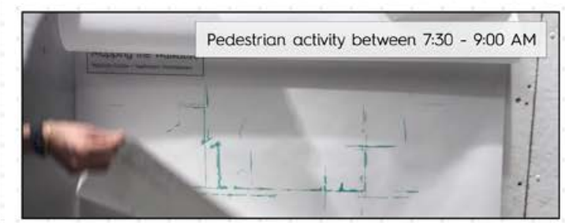
... and to understand the complex web of relationships between social, built environments and pedestrian movement

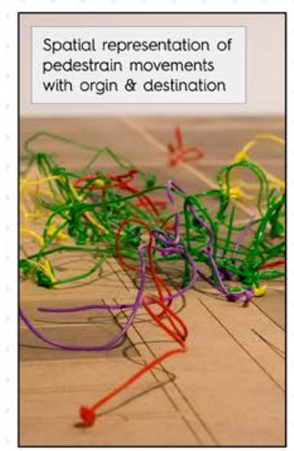


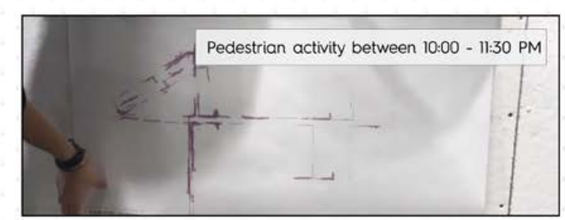
Our project was to redevelop one of the two given sites where transit, culture & community came together in unique ways

Mapping the Walkative
COMMUNITY SCALE STUDY

...into a community hub







Spring 2017

Presenting.... in collaboration with Mauricio Casian

GIGA VILLAGE

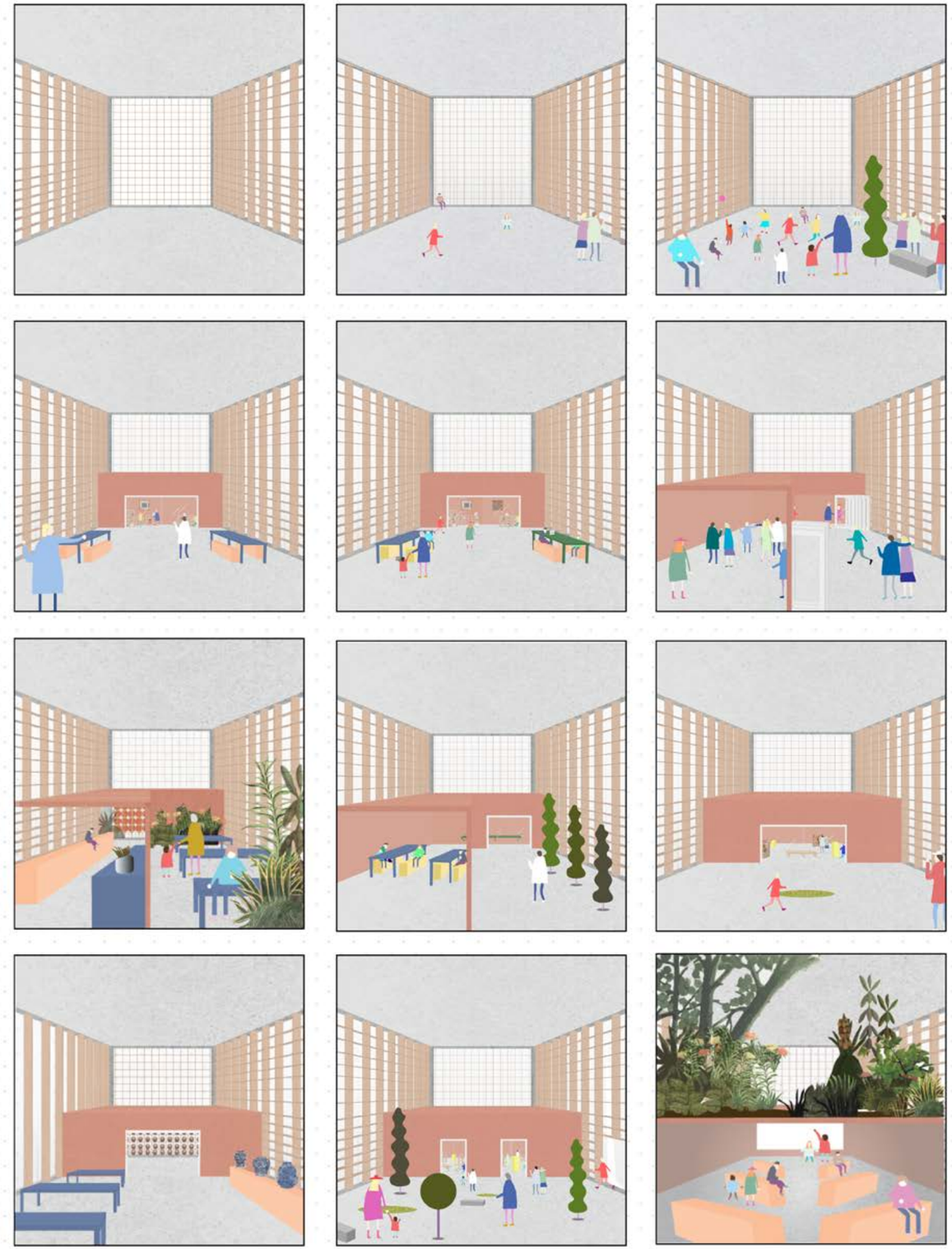
Town Center + Transit Hub, 250000 Sq Ft.

A new ***walkworthy*** addition to the vibrant neighborhood of Chinatown!

At ***158 W Cermak Road***... where once existed an empty parking lot... now stands an urban hub... exploring the intersection of ***culture and technology***... marrying the ***experience*** offered by culture with the ***pace*** of modern technology...

A ***modern day town center***... where people converge to exchange cultures, ideas and goods...

PIXELS as possibilitites



Another busy afternoon in Giga Village

Looking at the FLOOR PLAN....

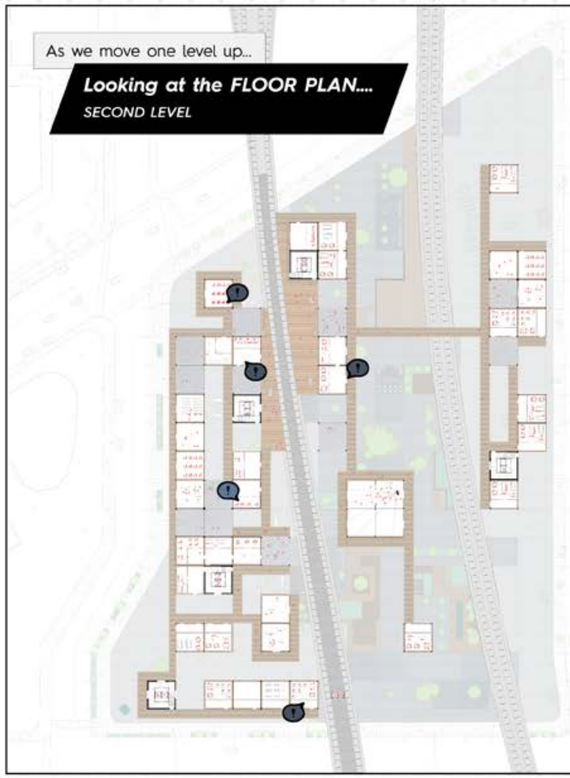
STREET LEVEL

It's a warm saturday afternoon and things are begining to heat up in Chinatown. The STREET LEVEL is bustling with pedestrian activity, the new 'Giga Village' has proved to be a good attraction in this vibrant neighborhood. As expected the ***restaurants*** are having a busy day, people look thrilled about variety on offer - spatially & gastronomically. The ***communal workshops*** have been very popular with both the locals and visitors alike. A lot of people seem to be indulging in a variety of workshops and tutorial classes on offer. Even the ***handicraft stores*** and ***DIY craft stores*** look packed! The ***retail spaces*** also seem to be attracting quite a bit of activity, they have allowed the local artisans and small scale entrepreneurs to express themselves and flourish. The biggest hits though, are the ***kiosks*** spread throughout the site - they seem to be attracting a lot of curious visitors who are enjoying the nice weather outdoors. We can see a lot of people flocking to the ***food stalls*** that have poped up towards the center of Giga Village.

As we move one level up...

Looking at the FLOOR PLAN....

SECOND LEVEL



Over on the street level things look just as busy courtesy of the red line CTA station... The ***auxilary platforms*** have proved to be quite effective... and popular with the crowds... The ***food carts*** made their way up to the second level as well... The platforms have been taken over by ***kiosks*** that are taking advantage of the proximity to a popular transit hub...

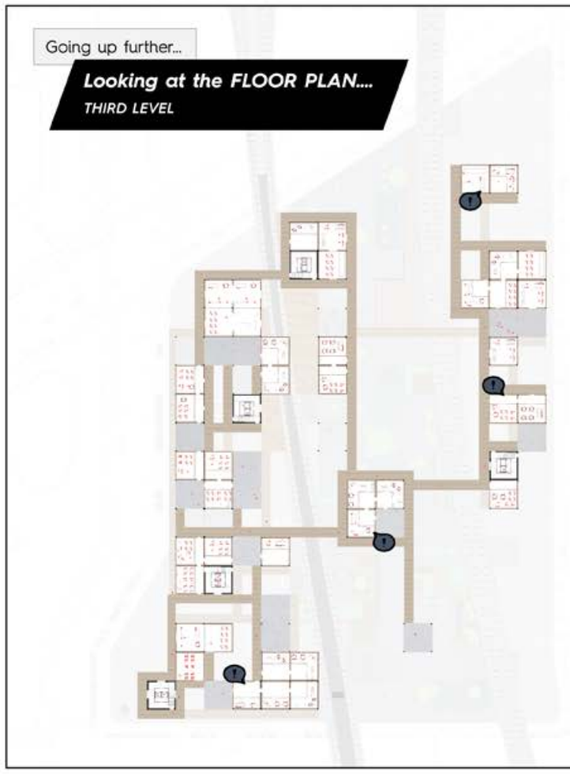
The ***learning spaces*** are full with inquisitive learners engaged by unique ***classes*** and ***workshops***...

The ***event Spaces*** are mostly booked... We can see a group of young adults having one of their parties... A group of big lectures and convocations have taken over quite a few of the event spaces towards the nort-west side... Despite being a saturday some of the offices look to be quite occupied with the supervisors and support staff...

Going up further...

Looking at the FLOOR PLAN....

THIRD LEVEL



From here we get a glimpse into the most user specific area of Giga Village... where ***digital programs*** and facilitites aim to support the growing needs of the neighborhood and offer opportunities...

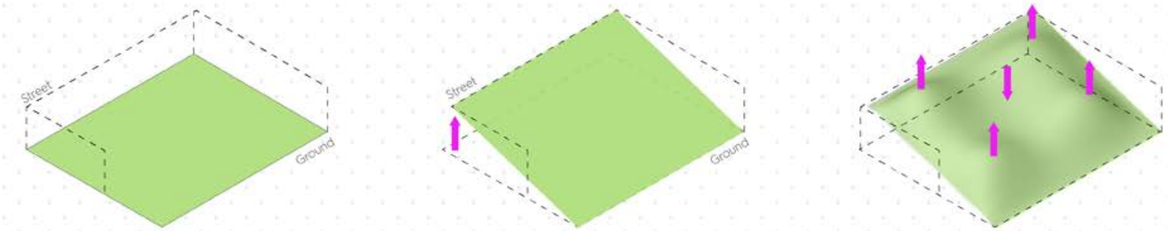
First up are the ***co-work spaces***, where the day just seems to have started... The modular workstations and open floor plan create different settings within a small space, opening up ***possibilities of different interactions*** between the different groups of employees... They are sparsely occupied... understandable as it's a weekend.

The ***digital hubs***, distributed around the site and have proved to be one of the most popular programs offered... Frequented by residents from all walks of life... we can see a group of kindergarteners being introduced to smart learning technologies... A group of high school kids are using the resources available to fabricate prototypes for their science projects...

A local start-up has been busy using the ***Maker Spaces*** to fabricate their new product... local craftsmen and designers are also utilizing the facilities to realize their projects...

In the city of ***Chicago***, on the north bank of the river... at ***320 E North Water***... where once existed an empty parking lot.... now stands a new landmark... ***inspired by the industrial history*** of the city and the river, ***facilitating its present urban life*** while ***speculating on a more sustainable future...***

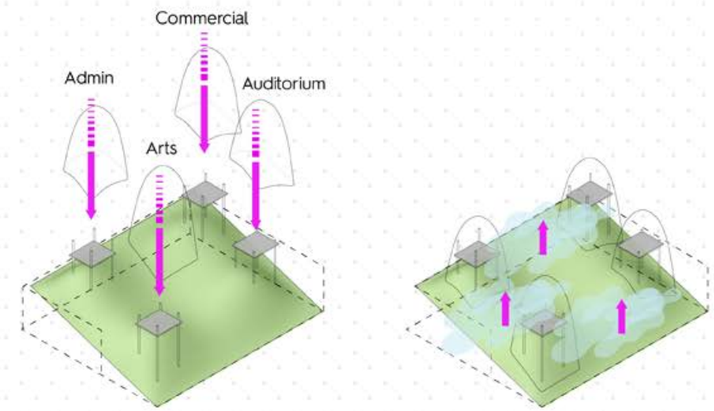
A ***symbol*** of new architecture that permeates beyond a building... into the street where it ***integrates into the city fabric*** and engages the users...



Surface

Angle the surface to join both levels

Warp surface to create a landscape

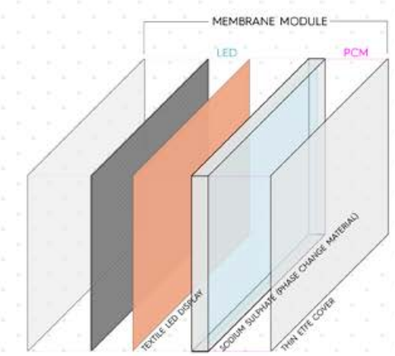


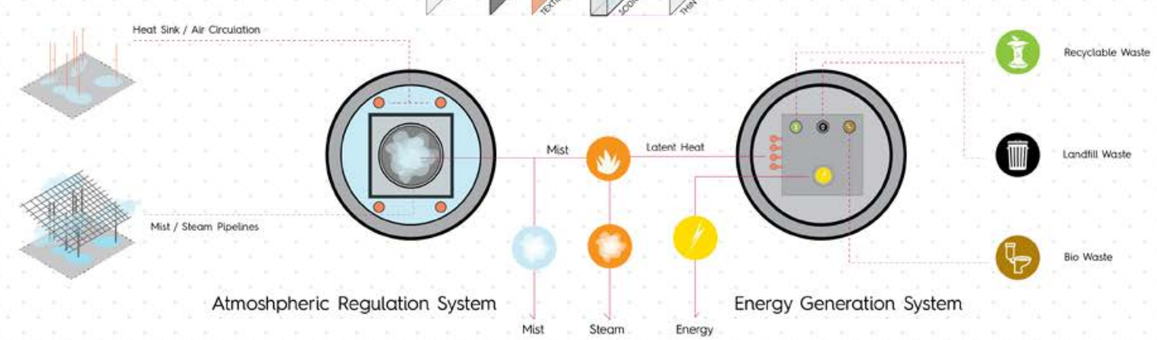
Add platforms for fixed programs

Cover them with membranes

Control experience/environment through the ground

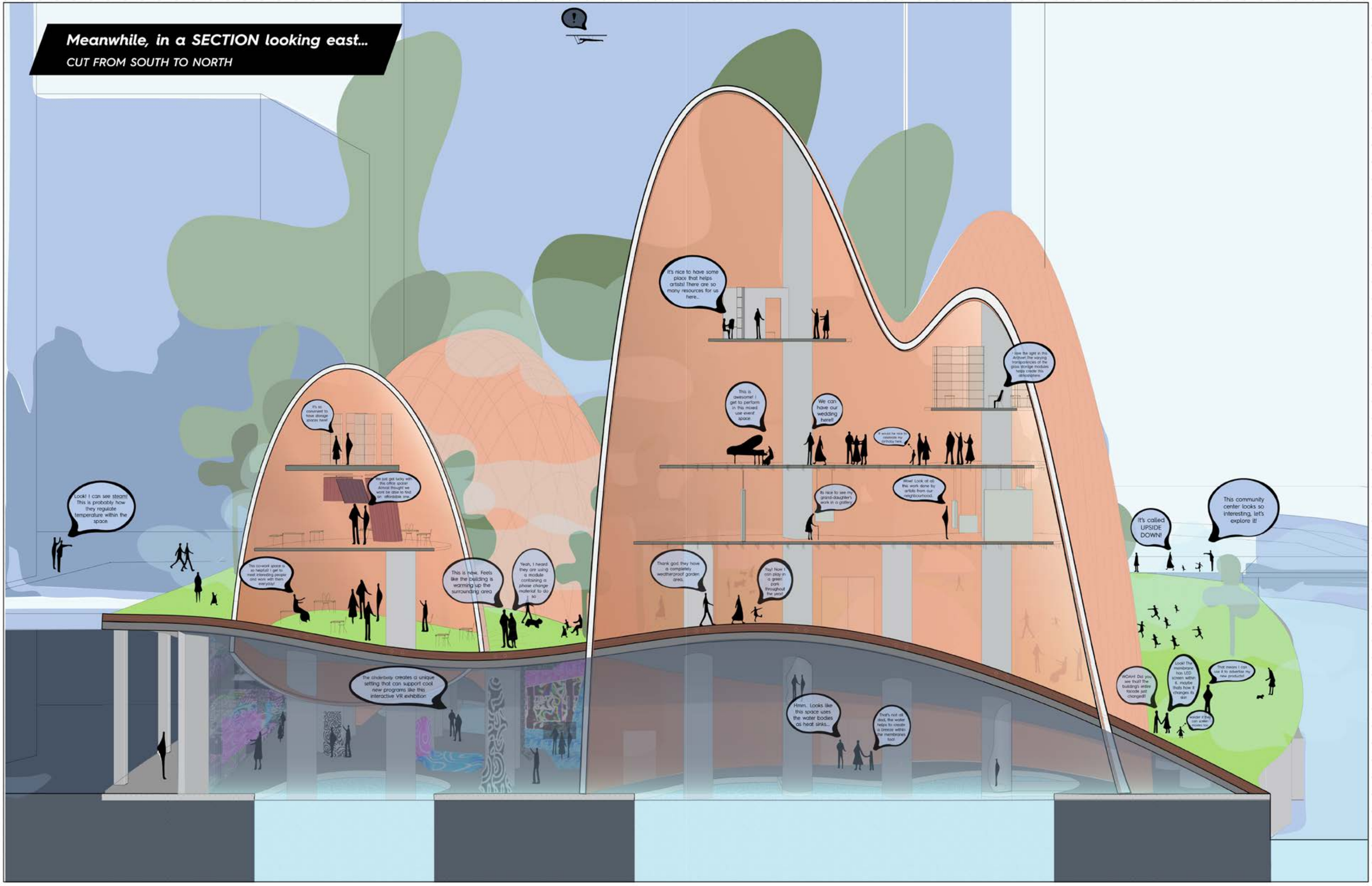
Using Mist and Steam





Atmoshpheric Regulation System

Energy Generation System


Meanwhile, in a SECTION looking east...
CUT FROM SOUTH TO NORTH
Look! I can see steam! This is probably how they regulate temperature within the space
It's so convenient to have storage spaces here!
We just got lucky with this office space! Almost thought we wont be able to find an affordable one
This co-work space is so helpful! I get to meet interesting people and work with them everyday!
This is new. Feels like the building is warming up the surrounding area
Yeah, I heard they are using a module containing a phase change material to do so.
The Underbelly creates a unique setting that can support cool new programs like this interactive VR exhibition
It's nice to have some place that helps artists! There are so many resources for us here...
This is awesome! I get to perform in this mixed use event space
We can have our wedding here!!
It would be nice to celebrate my birthday here
Its nice to see my grand-daughter's work in a gallery
Wow! Look at all this work done by artists from our neighbourhood.
Thank god they have a completely weatherproof garden area.
Yay! Now I can play in a green park throughout the year
I love the light in this Artgiver! the varying transparencies of the glass storage modules helps create this atmosphere
Hmm. Looks like this space uses the water bodies as heat sinks...
That's not all dad, the water helps to create a breeze within the membranes too!
It's called UPSIDE DOWN!
This community center looks so interesting, let's explore it!
WOAH! Did you see that!! The building's entire facade just changed!!
Look! The membrane has LED screen within it, maybe thats how it changes its skin
That means I can use it to advertise my new products!
I wonder if they can screen movies too

MULTIPLE SINGULARITY

Work/Live Studio, 3200 Sq Ft.

Spring 2016

An architectural ***intervention*** that responds to the ***changing work-life dynamics***!

PHYSICAL MODEL

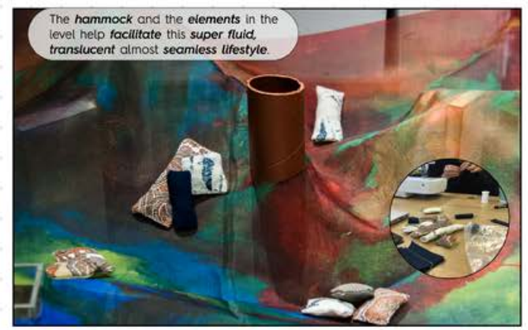
Built at 1/4" = 1' scale

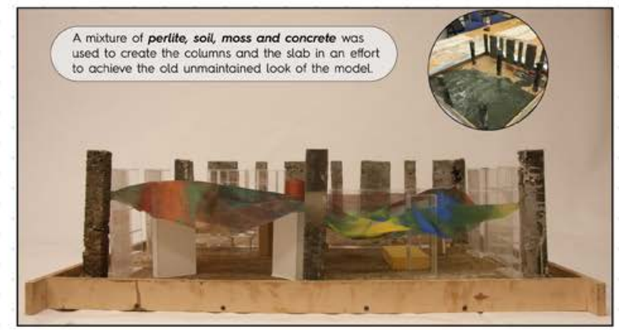
Menwhile, in a carefully crafted concrete model

Furniture made in collaboration with ***Vidisha Aggarwal.*** Pillows designed and fabricated by ***Sabrina Yang.***

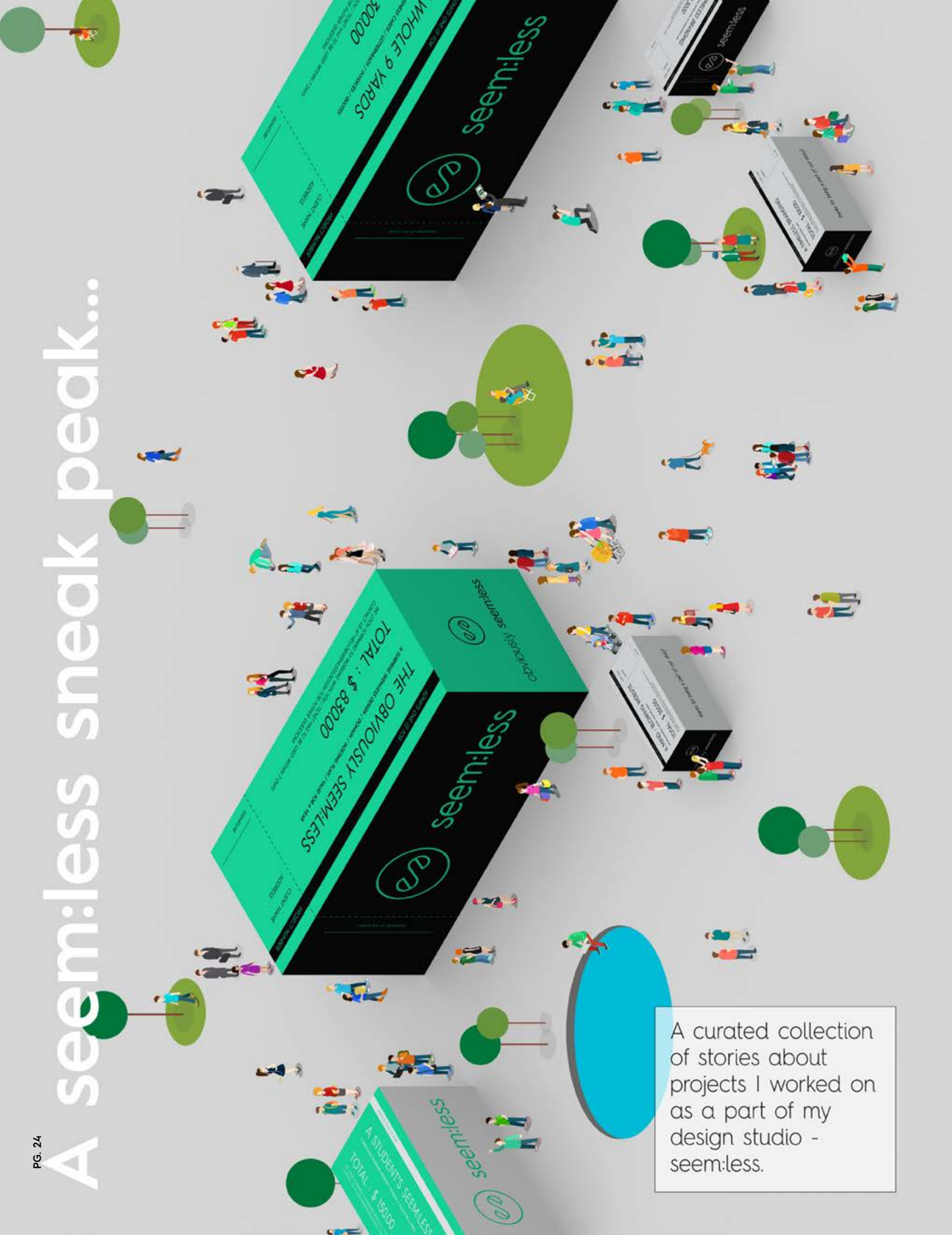
Drawing inspiration from themes such as ***historic preservation*** and beauty of integrity, this ***massive old post office*** is ***re-imagined*** as an ***old, deserted building*** that has been drastically affected by time and lack of proper care. It is treated as a ***ruin which would be re-activated by a new set of programs.***

With well articulated and intentional material choices this ***model presents us an interpretation of what life might look and feel like*** within Multiple Singularity. It celebrates and cherishes the past of this landmark building while also looking towards a new lease of life.





A seem:less sneak peak...



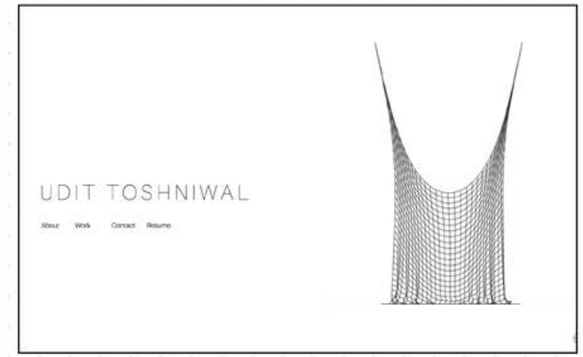
A curated collection of stories about projects I worked on as a part of my design studio - seem:less.

Alaiia Gujral | www.alaiiagujral.com

A website that attempts to capture the the process of indigo dying - an important part of Alaiia's work using transitions and gradients.

Udit Toshniwal | www.udittoshniwal.com

Conveying the fexibility and diversity of the designer through an interactive mesh that users can modify to create their own design.



Shilparamam

A new identity borrowing from a rural past, looking towards a modern future for a new chain of cultural centers for the newly seperated state of Andhra Pradesh.

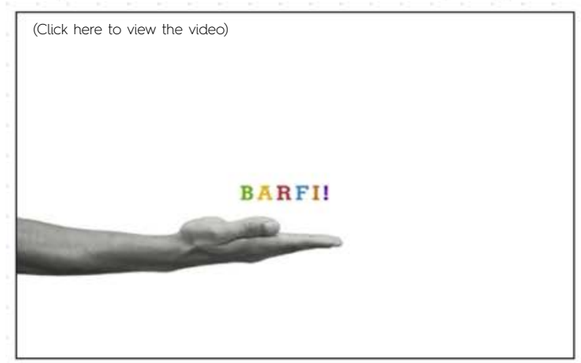
White Oak Table

A foray into the world of furniture making. An attempt at recreating classical accent table using double tapered legs and expressive hardwood (walnut + oak).

Barfi | Assistant director for designer Harish Subu

An alternate title sequence using ASL and VFX for a bollywood movie about a deaf and dumb protagonist.

(Click here to view the video)



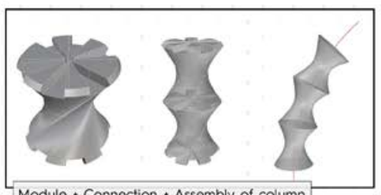
Indicator Jacket

A jacket for pedestrians and cyclists to increase their safety on roads. Helps indicate their prescence better.

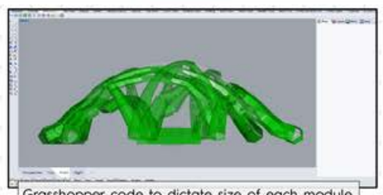
Vaulted Gateways | AA VS Istanbul - Conceptual & Parametric Design, Robotic Fabrication

A self-standing transitional pavillion that sits between two university buildings with distinct architectural styles. To be fabricated using Kuka Robotic Arm and foamcore modules of fixed sizes.

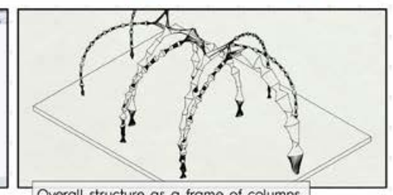
Part 1 (2 weeks) : Proposal - In collaboration with Emile Pop, Ozguc, Dilara and Saziye



Module + Connection + Assembly of column



Grasshopper code to dictate size of each module



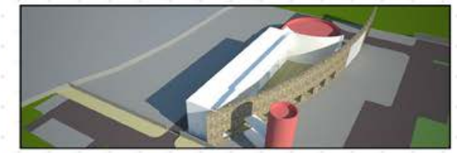
Overall structure as a frame of columns

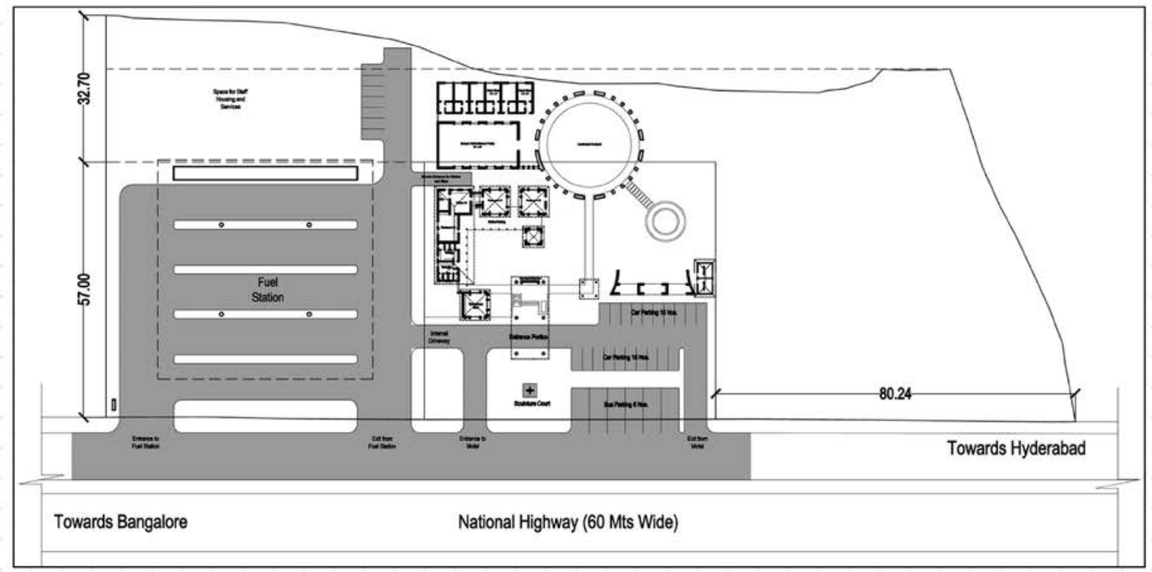
Part 2 (2 weeks) : Realization - In collaboration with Alexandros Kallegias, Elif Erdine and 35 other students

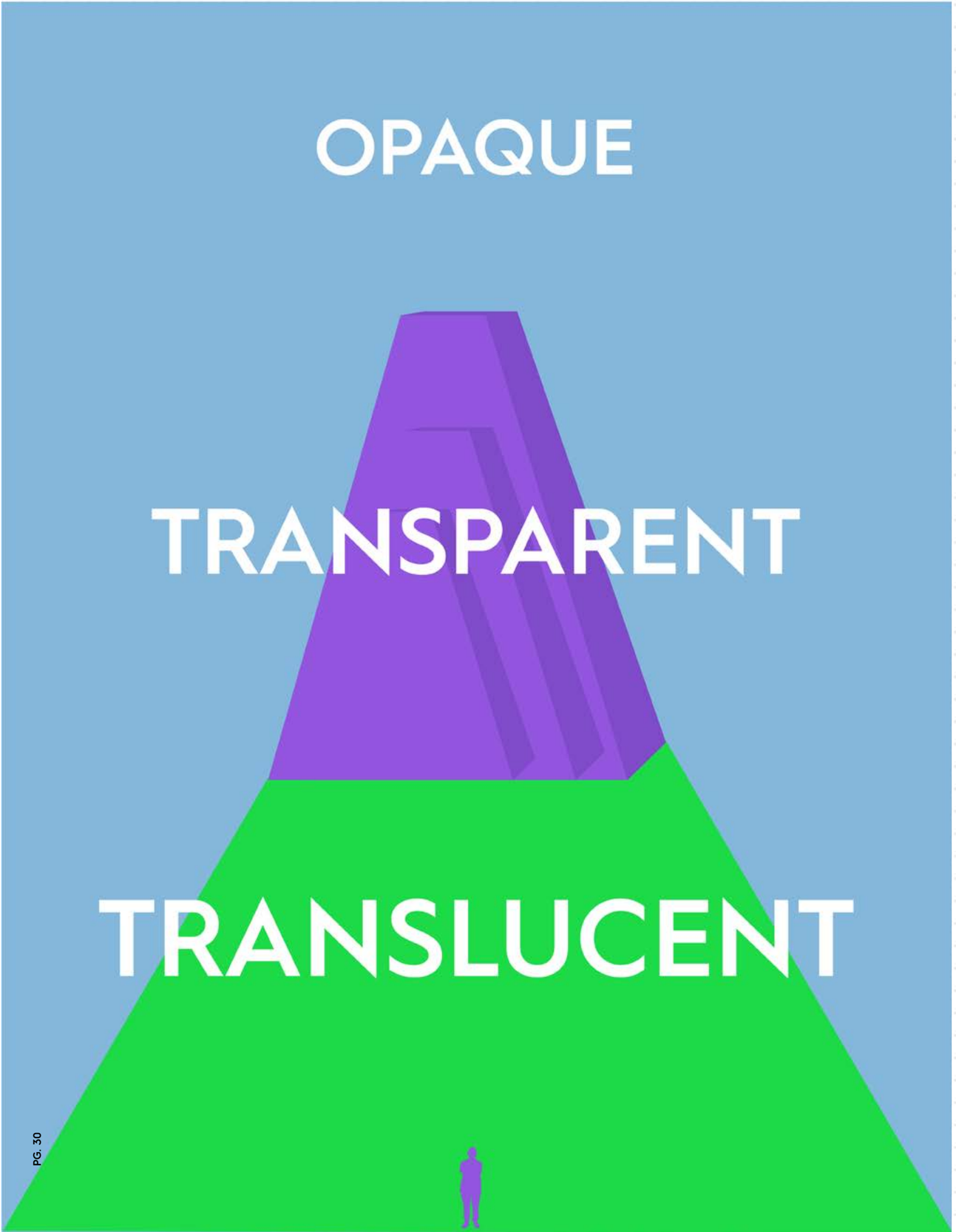
It was the Spring of 2015 and I was working at SMG Design

Stop n Go - A Motel on Highway 44

DIGITAL MODELING, RENDERING, TECHNICAL DRAWINGS, SITE VISITS







Opaque.

Transparent.

Translucent.

Thoughts on spatial fluidity in contemporary sacred architecture.

Abstract

The paper responds to the idea that religious architecture can transcend the boundaries of the religion and act as an open, inclusive space for communities. The paper argues that in the *flat world* that we are living in, coexistence of different cultures and religions is inevitable and Architecture has a huge role to play in how seamless this coexistence is. The permeability of sacred architecture is explored in terms of its opacity. The paper argues that although we can say that we are a truly global world, the interactions within various communities are not as seamless as they could be and that Architecture has a potentially important role to play in enabling a more diverse and accepting sense of community. It is argued that Houses of Gods still stand as walls between different cultures, even though they exist in the same communities and that these opaque, rigid walls must evolve into translucent, semi-permeable membranes in order for communities to become more inclusive. Taking this one step further the paper also questions the possibility of a single architectural space capable of facilitating different religions and beliefs in the future.

Key Words : Sacred, Religious, Culture, Architecture, Communities, Boundaries, Tension, Inclusive, Coexist, Space, Permeability.

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Chicago, January 19, 2017

To whom it may concern,

I taught Seetharam Vallabhaneni during his 3rd year undergraduate architecture studio at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The studio took place between September and December of 2016.

During the studio, students were tasked to design an art/ community center along the main branch of the Chicago River while addressing physical and non-physical conditions of the city. Each of them was asked to explore new representation techniques, conduct research, and increase the sophistication of their approach to design and formal analysis. Seetharam's work as part of the studio addressed all of these aspects, taking the initial studio brief and complementing it with his personal interest in technology, environmental conditions, sustainability, and graphic representation. It was an ambitious project that, while not completely resolved (as expected in the third design studio of their career), outlined the willingness to tackle complex issues in a comprehensive way and explore it through the lens of design. He also demonstrated how a studio brief can be a starting point to explore personal interests and positions that can help develop and inform a longer trajectory beyond the length of the semester.

Seetharam is a young designer and taking an internship in your office will continue to shape his emerging career, providing new design skills, strengthening his ability to focus and edit his conceptual approach, and incorporating new points of view and topics to his work. At the same time, I believe that having Seetharam as an intern would be a great asset for your studio, as he brings a strong work ethic, excellent attitude, willingness to learn, and well-rounded skills that he has been building in his architecture program as well as in other programs that he has attended between semesters to complement his education.

Having taught him this past semester, and seeing his work and attitude, I support his application for an internship in your office.

Sincerely,

Iker Gil
Founder and Director, MAS Studio
Founder, editor-in-chief, MAS Context

SAIC School of the Art Institute of Chicago

www.saic.edu

February 2nd 2017

– To Who it may Concern –

LETTER OF REFERENCE – Seetharam Vallabhaneni

I have come to know Seetharam over the past two years as an undergraduate student in design studios and theory courses, and subsequently through one-on-one conversations and advising sessions at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Seetharam excelled in all aspects of these courses and his work showed evidence of critical and careful thinking, creativity, sophisticated translation of ideas and clarity in communication. Seetharam was awarded an "A" letter grade in his Architectural Theory course and equally excelled in his Design Studio Courses.

Seetharam is a young, energetic and discreet design thinker and maker and his research, design presentation and writing skills are well above the standard of individuals of his age. He has exhibited clear and strong leadership and an eagerness to discover and contribute to our studio culture in a meaningful way. He is respectful and sincere in his interactions with others and in his concern for a revised mandate for responsible design and architecture across disciplinary boundaries.

I respectfully and unconditionally give my full support to Seetharam in his desire to broaden his experience, to explore, collaborate and become a valuable team member in the profession. I have confidence that he will be an excellent ambassador for SAIC. Please do not hesitate to contact me should any additional information be required.

Yours sincerely,

Associate Professor Hennie Reynders Ph.D
Chair of Architecture
Department of Architecture, Interior Architecture & Designed Objects
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Feb. 4, 2017

Recommendation Letter for Seetharam Vallabhaneni

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Andrew Santa Lucia and I want to wholeheartedly recommend Seetharam Vallabhaneni for an introductory position at your office. I have known Seetharam for two years and have taught him in both architectural studio and advanced parametric technique seminars where he has performed in the top 1% of his class. As one of my students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Seetharam has excelled in the areas architectural drafting, representation, 3D modelling, and implementation of guided design ideas, employing a strong technical and creative foundation for his architectural projects. In lieu of this, his representational skills - both digital and analog - are undoubtedly amongst the strongest in his class. In using a myriad of contemporary digital workflows, Seetharam has been able to produce a number of complicated design interactions with great efficiency. Seetharam's time at your office will introduce him to the profession of architecture at an important time of his career. In addition, being introduced to the rigorous workflows of professional practice will benefit not only him, but also his employers because of his aptitude for guidance and new processes. His dedication to architecture is unrivaled; his intellect coupled with his design techniques are projective and razor sharp; and his attitude coupled with his empathy is inspirational. I truly believe Seetharam will be a fantastic addition to your office and add an emergent voice within the profession that is optimistic and steadfast in its dedication to architectural culture.

Warmest regards,

Andrew Santa Lucia,
Assistant Professor of Practice,
School of Architecture, Portland State University
Co-Creative Director,
Office Andorus
Portland, OR & Chicago, IL
asanta@pdx.edu
305 -343 -6285

(Click to view my complete portfolio)

Dear Design,

This is my portfolio
or.. a provocatively idiosyncratic love letter from a young optimistic designer.

With Love,
Seetharam Vallabhaneni

17.6868° N, 83.2185° E - 41.8781° N, 87.6298° W